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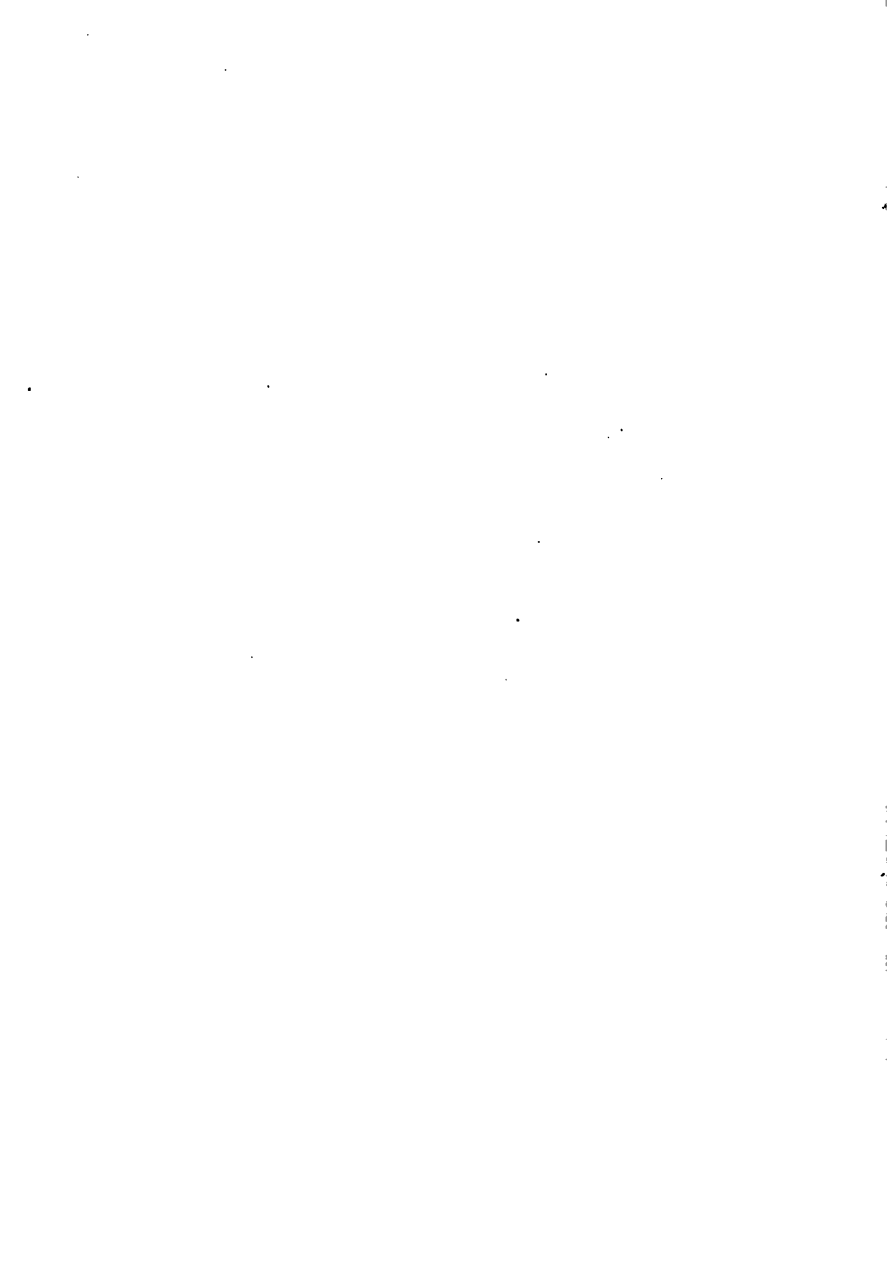
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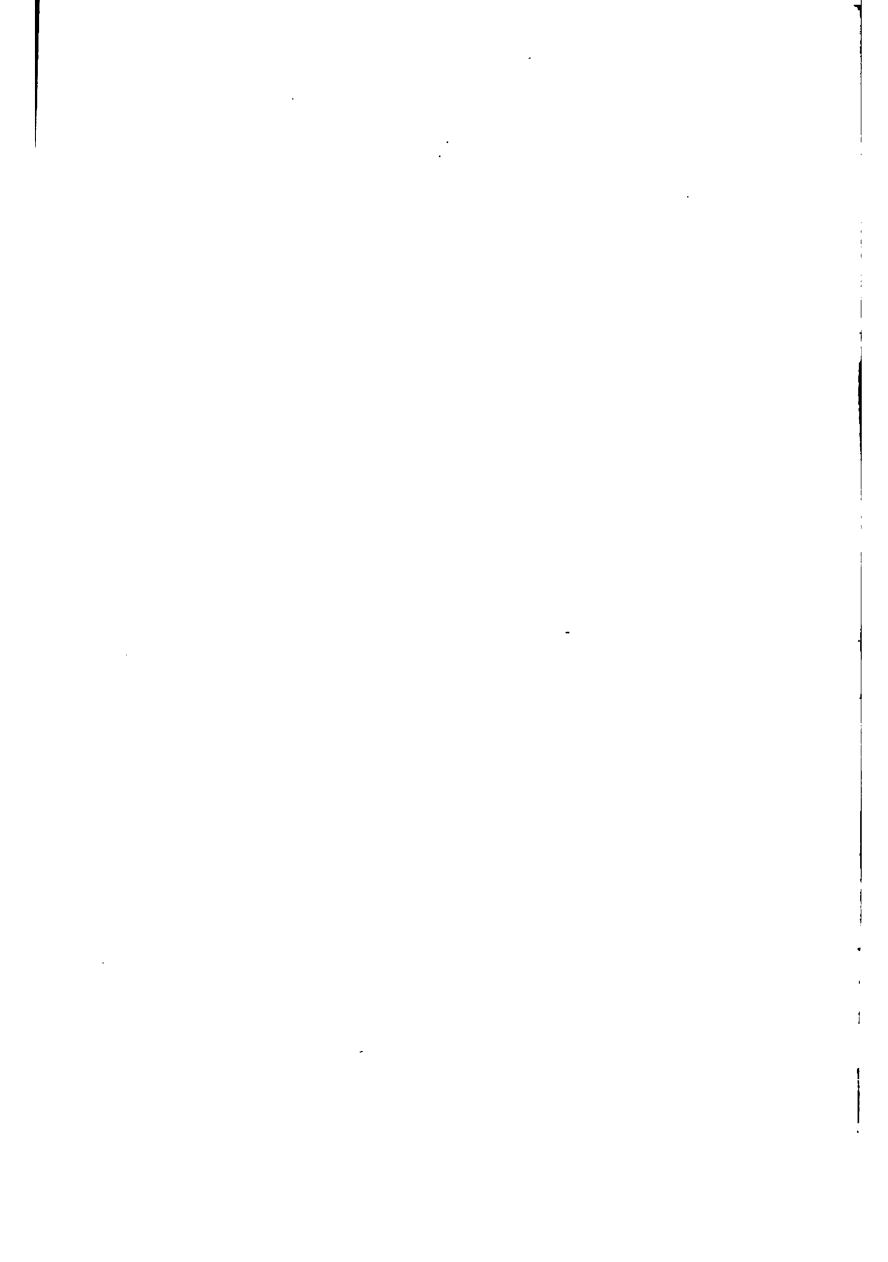
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THE EXTENSION
— OF —
THE INDEFINITE.

A Sermon of the times,

BY THE

REV'D OMNIA OMNIBUS, S.I.B.I.

Rector of the Church of St. Latitudinarius, Broadwalk, Beamends.

Fellow of the Antediluvian Abrogation Society.

Author of "An Inquiry into the Limitations of Lunacy," etc., etc.

"Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?"

"Into another Gospel, which is not another."

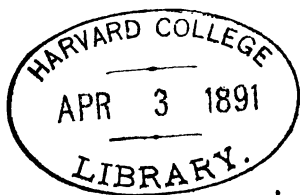
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TOOTOO, UTTER & MOONSHINE, Publishers,

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1890.

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SPREADABROAD, BEAMENDS,
April 1, 1890.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR :

The undersigned, a Committee of a meeting of associated parishioners of the Church of St. Latitudinarius, Broadwalk, and of the Church of All Sects, Spreadabroad, beg leave to assure you of the general sensation produced by your recent discourse on the Extension of the Indefinite.

We can imagine nothing more in harmony with the times than the views which you have thus so eloquently expressed; and, as we are convinced that nothing can better conduce to the variation of that environment of principle, which has hitherto more or less enclosed mankind, than the indefinite extension of the "extension of the indefinite," we earnestly request that you will favor us with a copy of this most remarkable discourse for publication.

We are, Reverend and Dear Sir,

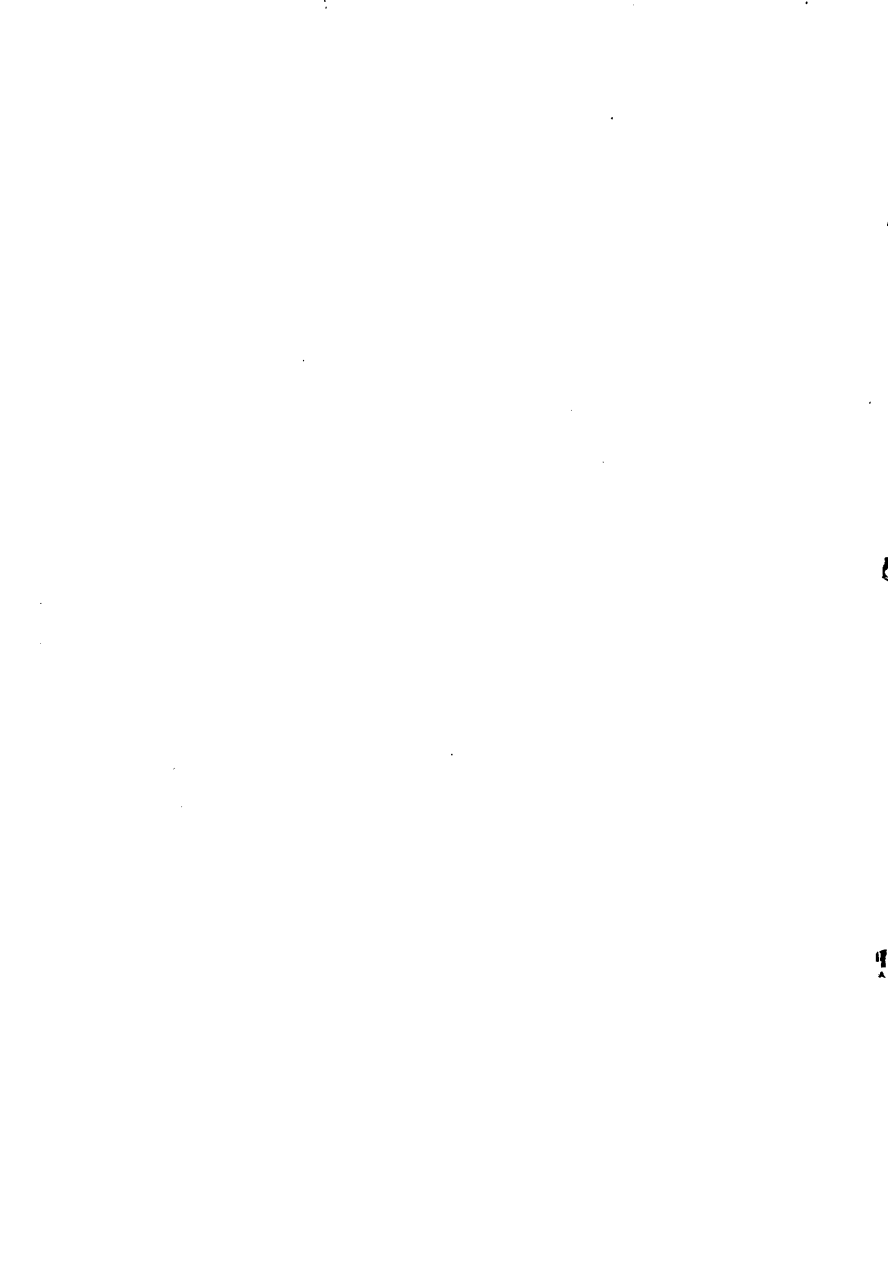
With distinguished sentiments,

M. T. SOUNDING.

T. BELL BRASS.

A. TINKLING CYMBAL.

To the Reverend OMNIA OMNIBUS, S.I.B.I., Rector, etc., etc.



BROADWALK, BEAMENDS,

April 1, 1890.

GENTLEMEN :

I have the honor to respond without a moment's hesitation to your flattering note, of this appropriate date, requesting a copy, for publication, of my recent discourse on the extension of the indefinite.

I need hardly say that the discourse was prepared without expectation that it would be published, or would be known beyond the circle of that appreciative audience which I have for some years past, I think not unsuccessfully, endeavored to please. It is particularly gratifying to me that the request for publication has come from an association combining members of the Church of St. Latitudinarius and of the Church of All Sects, as the unification of these parishes has been one of the aims which I have for a long time consistently, though not always professedly, had in view. I am persuaded that Broadwalk and Spreadabroad already are invisibly one. Their visible union cannot be long deferred, and it will be a happy earnest of the fulfilment of wider aspira-

tions toward which the extension of the indefinite is steadily progressing.

I enclose the manuscript already prepared for the press, and have great pleasure in placing it at your disposal.

I am, gentlemen, with effusion,

Your obedient servant,

O. OMNIBUS.

Messrs. M. T. SOUNDING,

T. BELL BRASS,

A. TINKLING CYMBAL.

“Which Things are an Allegory.”

—GAL. IV. 24.

THESE words are introduced by the Apostle Paul into the argument which he addresses to the Galatians with the purpose of showing them their true relations as Christians to the law of Moses. After their conversion to the Christian faith, certain false Apostles and teachers had crept in among them striving to persuade them that except they should keep the law of Moses they could not be saved. Nor was it merely the moral law (at that time commonly associated with the name of Moses) which they were required to observe, but also another kind of law, sometimes called ceremonial as requiring the performance of various rites and formal acts. And the teaching by which the Galatians were being seduced from their faith, was that they

were indebted for their salvation not only to Christ but also, and perhaps chiefly, to the punctuality and propriety of their performance of all those acts which the law of Moses enjoined upon them.

We need not for our present purpose to enter particularly into the consideration of these, nor indeed into the consideration of the general argument of the Apostle. What it is proposed at present particularly to consider is, first, the true principle of interpretation of Holy Scripture of which the Apostle here affords an admirable illustration, and, secondly, the conclusion to which his argument leads us.

Assuming, as I think in a discourse of this nature may be permissible, the authenticity of the Epistle to the Galatians, and the authorship and probable previous existence of Paul, we find our theme dividing itself into two parts, which I shall in turn consider ; after which I shall direct your attention to certain practical counsels which I trust may guide you through trials and temptations of a certain kind, which you

will be the better able to appreciate when you shall have attained to the proper understanding of the true import of the Apostle's words.

I do not say a proper understanding of the Apostle's meaning, but a proper understanding of the true import of the Apostle's words. And I make this distinction advisedly; for the point of importance in the understanding of words is certainly their true import; and, as to this, it is manifest that the meaning of him who speaks them is of little or no consequence—quite a secondary consideration. Because the Apostle meant to say something, does it follow that he said it, or that he said nothing else? We all know that human language can be subjected to no such rigid rule of interpretation. And particularly in regard to the language of Apostles and Prophets, and others of that class, who lived so many years ago—long before knowledge had even begun to take its tottering infant steps in the direction of the immense and constantly increasing strides with which it progresses in the present day. We ought to be carefully

on our guard against the propensity, which is, in some sort natural, to be biassed by what appears to have been their plain and obvious meaning. The true import, my brethren, the true import of their words is that only which concerns us ; and that these men were infinitely less qualified to realize this, than we are in the present advanced state of human knowledge, is a proposition which, if not axiomatic, is at least one of which we need and desire no proof.

So absolutely transparent is this proposition that I should not have thought it worth while to speak of it at any length in this preliminary portion of our discourse, if it were not for the bearing which it has upon the notion which is, in some remote and dark corners and crevices of the Church, still cherished by a few persons not yet fully illuminated with the bright beams of the Natural Intelligence ; and which leads them to confuse, or blend in some strange and, to us, unintelligible way, the meaning of the persons who spoke or wrote the words of Holy Scripture with what they consider to have been

a Divine guidance, direction or inspiration. Far be it from us, my brethren, to speak slightly of this school of thought, if such that can justly be called which seems to be only a smouldering remnant of the once raging fire of superstition. Our beloved Church is widely tolerant and comprehensive ; and respects and shelters even the private opinion of the few surviving upholders of the heathen belief in the actuating power of a divine afflatus, which is claimed to be capable of so operating upon the human understanding as to cause it to think and mean what is thought or meant by the Divine Being, or as to make human language instrumental in the expression of the Divine meaning, whether the intellect of the speaker were able to understand it or not. But such tolerance should not be construed into approval ; nor should we imagine that the Church for one moment gives countenance to the idea that any meaning should be attached to the words of Holy Scripture which is in any respect inconsistent with the *true import* of those words. The mere expres-

sion of such an idea is sufficient to expose its folly. And when the argument is brought to this point, and the only question which remains is as to our own capacity of determining for ourselves what the true import is, that surely is a question to which we can return but one answer. It borders closely upon the unthinkable that the Natural Intelligence should not copiously suffice for the apprehension of the true import of words—since words are essentially the attribute of the human; and it might well go without saying that any words which a natural can understand, we can understand.

I have been the more full in the expression of these introductory thoughts, because, as will be obvious when we come to consider the words of the text more particularly, the true principle of the interpretation of Holy Scripture is made much more plain by the observance of the distinction between the true import of its words, and the meaning with which they were originally spoken; and because the text furnishes so remarkable an illustration of the

advantage of not limiting ourselves in our application of such words to the intent which originally produced them. In the application of this principle, more—very much more—will be discovered than we should apprehend in the application of the other principle ; and we shall see that even the view which the Apostle took of the meaning of his own words—broad as that view must necessarily have been—is narrow by comparison with that which we shall be able to unfold in our apprehension of their true import.

With sincere and devout reverence then for this principle, sustained and steadied by that conscious dignity which it infuses into our manhood, we now approach the first division of our meditations, and proceed to unfold the true import of the words of our text—"Which things are an allegory."

At once becomes apparent, I will not say the misunderstanding of the Apostle, but the inadequacy of the Apostle's own meaning. The meaning of the words from his point of view

appears to be that the relation of Abraham to Sarah and Hagar, or the relation to Abraham of his sons by the free wife Sarah, and by the bondmaid Hagar, was a figure or illustration of the relation of the Christians and of the Jews to God. And he is content with the inference that as the son of the true wife according to the promise was nearer to Abraham than the son of the bondmaid, and became his heir, to the total or partial exclusion of the son of the bondmaid, so we Christians are nearer to God and partakers of a better portion from Him than the Jews can be ; and therefore must expect that they will be envious and resentful toward us, and must be prepared to suffer persecution and ill treatment from them, and must anticipate and guard against their endeavors to draw us out of our state of freedom into their state of bondage. All of which is excellent so far as it goes, and is abundantly verified by the obvious superiority of the state of Christians to that of the Jews from the Apostle's day to this, as well as by the constant annoyance to which we con-

tinue to be subjected by that imperturbable and pertinacious race, which cannot be induced to forego the opportunity of pressing us to disadvantage in our most cherished commercial transactions, and which swarms into, overruns and crowds us out of our most pleasing and healthful summer resorts. But is this all? By no means. For what is an allegory, and what can we understand, or rather what can we not understand, from the statement that the things concerning Abraham, Sarah and Hagar are an allegory?

An allegory has been defined to be a figurative discourse in which something else is intended than is contained in the words literally taken; and if we substitute, as we can now see that we ought, the idea of true import for the idea of intent, we find the proper definition of an allegory to be that it is a figurative discourse the true import of which is other than is contained in the words literally taken. And, our capacity for the determination of such true import having already been established, the infer-

ence is inevitable that we have the Apostolic sanction for a principle of interpretation at once the most Catholic and elastic that it is possible for the Natural Intelligence to formulate. The extension of the indefinite becomes practically illimitable; for there is nothing in the whole range of precept or prohibition that can remain unaffected by its wide reaching and truly emollient influence.

So obvious is the tendency of this principle that I need hardly trouble you with illustrations. Many instances might be given wherein the precision of modern thought has been successful in discriminating between the true import of the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that meaning which in the literal sense of its words is, and has been wont to be considered, quite obvious. Take for example the text—"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat:" "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

These words have indeed been allowed to be in some sort figurative, but the plain intent contained in the words literally taken has nevertheless been shocking to that delicate and sensitive organization of the nervous system which is necessarily attendant upon an advanced stage of intellectual culture ; and it is a great comfort to realize that these words are not merely figurative, but also allegorical ; and that their true import is other than is contained in the words literally taken, and teaches us that however narrow the gate to eternal life may seem to those who have not tried to enter it, yet it widens to the touch of the principle of the extension of the indefinite, and opens upon a path which grows broader and broader until it expands into eternity itself. And so with regard to those other words which in the mouth of uncompromising literalists, who knew not what spirit they were of, has had in times past such a harsh and vindictive sound—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." And again,

"The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the people that forget God." And again, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." What terrors and anxieties have not been engendered in weak minds by the literal interpretation of such passages as these! And what unspeakable comfort is it to be able to class them all among the number of those—"Which things are an allegory!"

And if so much comfort and satisfaction may be legitimately derived from the application of this principle in the present stage of our learning, to what blessedness may we not hope to attain when the full work of that higher criticism — which is ever intent upon evolving from the words of Holy Scripture some profundity of import quite regardless of their intent — shall have been fully accomplished. Even now we may see the impending probability of a still wider interpretation of the language of the Apostle in the hypothesis formulated out of the depths of the unsearchable abyss of the Teutonic

mind—the cradle of the indefinite, and the true norm of its extension—the hypothesis, namely, that the original word rendered in our English version by the word *Which*, instead of being, as has been commonly supposed, a relative pronoun, is in fact an interrogative; so that the Apostle should be understood, not as asserting that certain things are allegorical, but as inquiring *which* of them are so! The extension of the indefinite, which would be consequent upon the application of this inquiry to the words of Holy Scripture in general, may be more easily imagined than described. Suffice it to say that this crowning triumph of the higher criticism leaves the student of Holy Scripture absolutely untrammelled in his methods and in his conclusions; and that there can be no statement, however apparently explicit, which may not be subjected to the far-reaching and unanswerable inquiry which it suggests.

Need I do more, my brethren, after what has been said, than touch upon the second head of our discourse, by merely pointing out the con-

clusion to which the principle of the Apostle's interpretation leads him in part, and to which it must lead us even more fully ; and which is none other than that we are brought by this Gospel into a state of liberty such as no previous or other religion could or can lay claim to. Instead of being subjected to a positive and definite law, we have been endowed with an intuitive principle which infallibly guides us into all truth in faith, and all propriety in morals. Penalty for disobedience, of necessity, has no place, where nothing but rectitude can ensue from the flowering of principle into practice. Antiquated ideas of Covenant, based upon Atonement, and Grace, derived from Incarnation, readily fade from the mind permeated with the conviction of its own intrinsic acceptability and excellence ; or give place to the higher conception of God manifest in the perfection of the Natural Intelligence, consequent upon the progressive development of the truly human.

The application of the extended indefinite to the practical issues of the daily life is not

without its difficulties. But these present no insuperable obstacle to one who is thoroughly imbued with the true spirit of liberty, and whose intellectual culture has accustomed him to the perception of the poetic wherever it may be found, whether in the words of Holy Scripture, the rules of the Church, or the affairs of life. "Which things are an allegory," is the thought which springs involuntarily to the mind confronted with any positive statement: and the more positive are the terms in which the statement is couched, the greater is the power of the allegorical method to resolve them into the effusions of a pervading poetic genius. Or, if there be repetition or duplication of positive statements, the interrogative form of the thought will be found highly useful; and by the persistent application of the question, "*Which things are an allegory?*" the mind will in time be brought to such an absolutely even balance as must necessarily result in a widely impartial judgment.

Perhaps nothing furnishes a broader field for

the operation of the principle of the extension of the indefinite than the subject which now engages the thoughts of so large a proportion of professing Christians—the subject, namely, of Catholic unity. Many questions which have hitherto perplexed the minds of devout and learned men endeavoring to solve this problem, become infinitely easier to answer by the application to them of the allegorical method; and some will be found to disappear altogether.

What may be called the obvious meaning of Holy Scripture contained in its words literally taken in regard to the subject of unity is, that the Son of Man founded a Church, or Visible Society, or Kingdom into which He designed to have those enter who believed on Him, and in which He designed them to abide, in order that they might grow up into Him in all things; and, being one with Him, might be one with each other in common faith and worship, and live under the supervision of a ministry deriving its authority from Him through the appoint-

ment of those whom He originally commissioned to that office.

A palpable and fatal defect in the plan indicated by this interpretation, and one, therefore, which reduces the interpretation itself to an absurdity, is, that no provision is thus made for those who are outside of the Church. Some provision indeed is made for bringing them into the Church, but, manifestly no such provision will meet the case of that increasingly numerous and respectable portion of mankind who prefer not to enter. It can never be imagined that so inadequate a provision would be made by Divine wisdom for the salvation of men, as the institution of a Church not sufficiently comprehensive to include all men, irrespective of their own intent; and not sufficiently tough and elastic to retain them after they were included. And if we suppose the Church to have been designed to rescue men from a state of perdition and destruction, it will follow that those who are not in the Church, not being rescued, will be lost. At least some extremists have held this

view, which makes the interpretation in question still more absurd. Misled by what we must, in our present advanced state of knowledge, be permitted to call a slavish adherence to the letter, or rather, a perverse preference of the meaning of Scriptural writers to the true import of their words, many have gone so far as to infer the necessity of inclusion within the Church; and the necessity, on the part of the Church, of maintaining specific professions of faith, and formal ceremonies called Sacraments, and a certain threefold order of ministry, in which the Bishops are said to hold the same office with that of the Apostles. "Out of the Church is no Salvation," and "Without a Bishop there is no Church," are maxims which, in the view of this class of persons, are infallibly true, and these are held as if there had been no such revelation from the Natural Intelligence as is expressed by those venerable aphorisms, *Salus populi Suprema Lex*, and *Vox populi vox Dei*.

But, in the extension of the indefinite, such principles and the interpretations which pro-

duce them are utterly untenable. The application of the Allegorical method blows them away like froth. And the singular advantage of this method is that, in the use of it, we are not obliged to contradict or abandon a single word of Holy Scripture. We accept it all—*ex-animo*—just as we do the Creeds, Articles and other formularies of the Church; believing every word, and honestly applying every rule, only not in that absurdly literal way which, in days of ignorance and superstition, misled men; and using freely that intuitive perception of the true import of these words and rules, which is the gift of the Natural Intelligence, and the result of the extension of the indefinite. In short, we accept all the old words and formularies, but not in the sense which used to be put upon them—for “Jerusalem which is above is *free*, which is the mother of us all.” “Which things are an allegory!”

We say then, in regard to this question of Catholic unity, that the following propositions are indisputable under the allegorical method:

First. That the Church is invisible.

Second. That the invisibility of the Church is the result of its identity of membership with the human family.

Third. That the world therefore is the true Church, of which all men are members.

Now, if these propositions were frankly accepted, what would become of the rival claimants to the honor of being the rightful representative of the Church which Christ founded? What would become of those who claim that the invisibility of the Church is the result of the election and predestination of individuals? What would become of those who spend their time in nothing else but the search after some new phrases which may serve as a platform or basis of re-union for the divided sects of an effete and inadequate Protestantism? Clearly their mission would be gone; and nothing would remain except our own beloved Church which cherishes the eminent characteristic of universal inclusion, and which has the twofold advantage of having inherited a system which asserts

all that is bound up in the old exclusive theory of An Ark for the salvation of men from destruction, and of being practically worked on the principle that there is no destruction from which men are to be saved ; that all men are already in the Church whether they come into it or not, and that this universal Church involves an universal priesthood of which every mother's son is a member, whether he be formally ordained and admitted thereto by lawful authority or not.*

* The expression, "every mother's son," must not be interpreted as exclusive of *any father's daughter*. The extent of universal priesthood doubtless involves the "abolition of sex" in the Kingdom of Heaven, or at least the identity of function in both sexes. In no other way can we give effect to the true import of the well-known words of St. Paul, "Let your women keep silence in the Churches," etc. This doctrine is well settled in America. In a recent visit to the States we were favored with an invitation to a *Musical* to be given for the benefit of "The Church of Christ (Scientist)," accompanied by a card bearing the legend "Mrs. F. J. Stetson, Pastor," which spoke volumes. But in that expansive country they easily exceed limits which we can hardly occupy. It is not long since an ingenious attempt was made to demonstrate,

Such is the blessed prospect of the continued extension of the indefinite. That we do not all now behold the fulness of this blessing is because we have not yet fully realized this extension ; but, by degrees, we are attaining to it, and, at our present rate of progress, perhaps it will not be long before we shall have apprehended it.

It is at least some encouragement to us, that we see all about us the signs of a deeper realization not only of the comprehensiveness of our Church, but of its true mission as standing between the extreme of those, on the one

in happy accord with the Preface to the Ordinal and other like evidences, that the doctrine of Apostolic Succession is merely the private opinion of a few erratic individuals—an admirable, though incidental, tribute to the value of authorized formularies as expressive of things not taught by the Church. We can hardly anticipate that the indefinite will be thus extended with us until we shall have abolished the House of Lords; made true Presbyterians of the Bishops; married all our deceased wives' sisters; elected the Prince of Wales President for a term of four years after the beatification of Her present perennial Majesty; and otherwise followed, or improved upon, the example of our Western offspring.

O. O.

hand, who still believe in the Divine institution of a visible Society designed to include all those who in repentance and faith will attach themselves to it, and of those, on the other hand, who still believe that repentance and faith will work just as well outside of the Society as inside of it. We bestride, as it were, the partition which marks the boundary between these fair domains on either side of us, and we have but to extend our limbs to a sufficient length on either side to keep ourselves in touch with both. Clearly, our strength is to sit still.

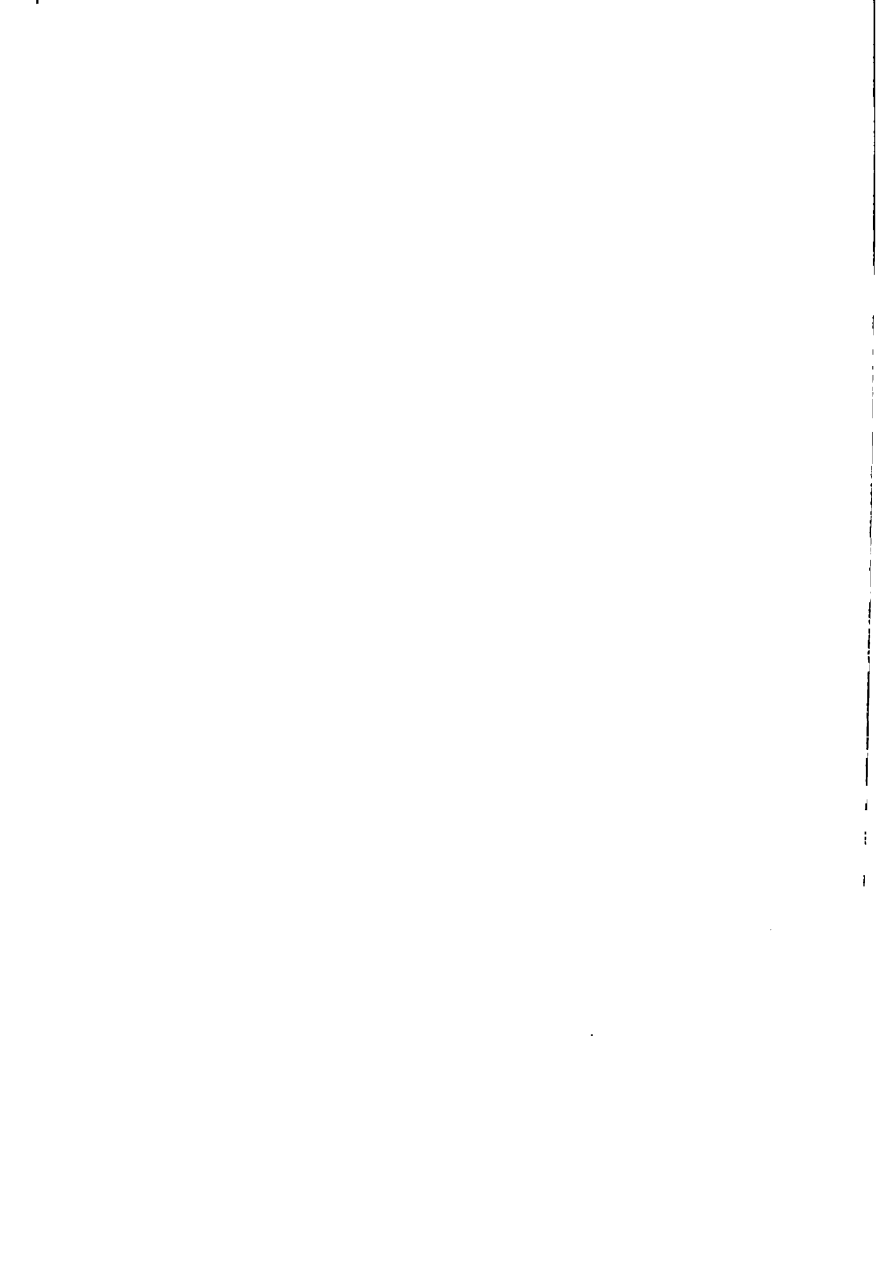
All that we need is the continued extension of the indefinite. Let us cherish the traditions of the past, for the sublime purpose of conforming them to the conditions of the present. Let us seek to uphold the order of the Church, for the purpose of showing how superior we are to it. Let us maintain the Sacraments of the Church as necessary to salvation, while we obliterate the distinction between those who receive them and those who neglect or reject them. Let us insist upon Confirmation as a

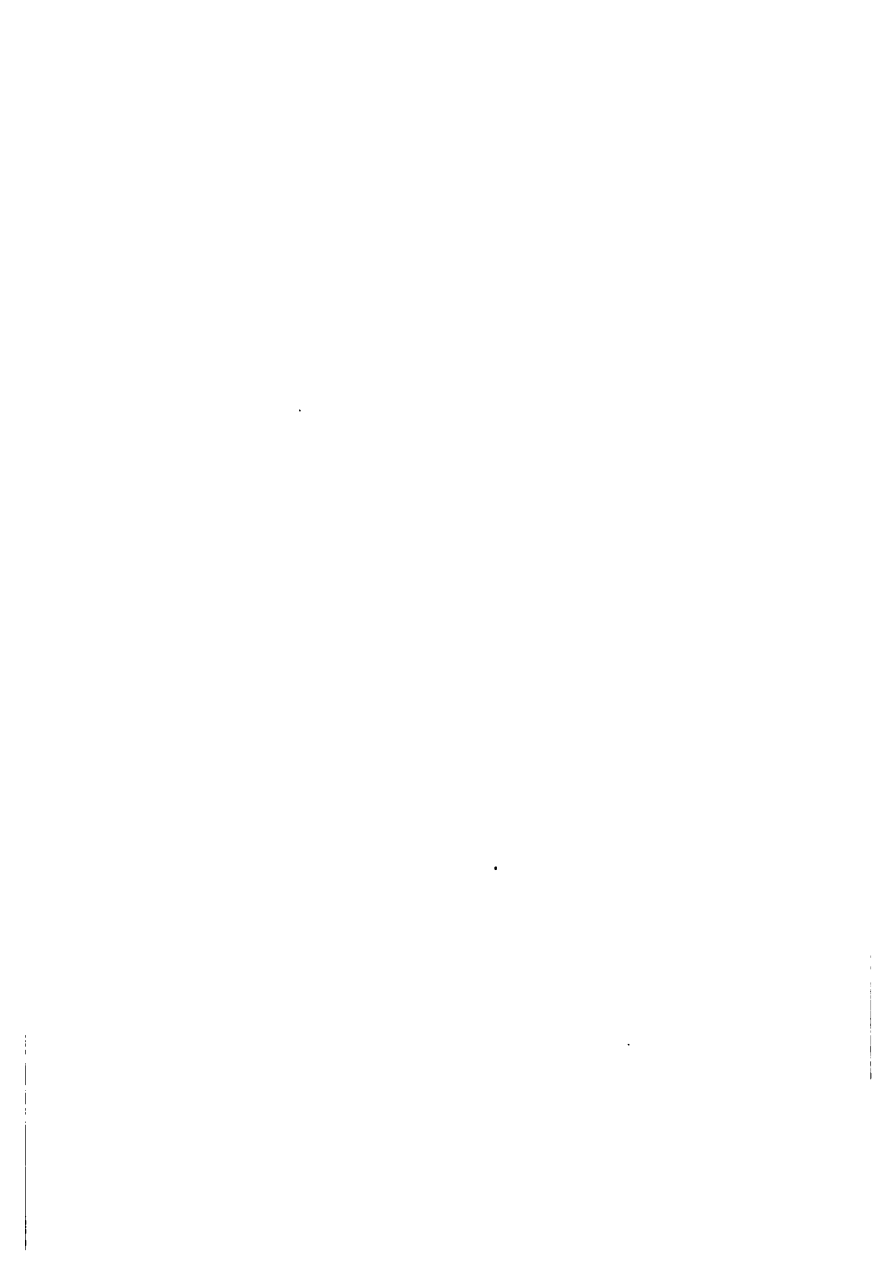
prerequisite to the Holy Communion, and continue to assert the right of all Evangelical Christians, especially those who are determined and consistent members of other religious bodies, to use the Communion of the Church as freely as they do their own. Let us continue to confer upon chosen men (after long and careful preparation, and after subjecting them to the most perplexing series of tests of character and fitness that the wit of man can devise), the formal and solemn gift of *authority to preach the Gospel*, and let us lose no opportunity of introducing to our pulpits those who have never received and have no desire to receive such authority as is committed to us to bestow. In no more practical way can we teach such gifted persons the distinction between the act of preaching and the precise method of performing a Sacerdotal function of the universal priesthood. And if we consistently pursue such a course as I have here marked out, nothing will better conduce to the extension of the indefinite, in which alone lies our ultimate hope

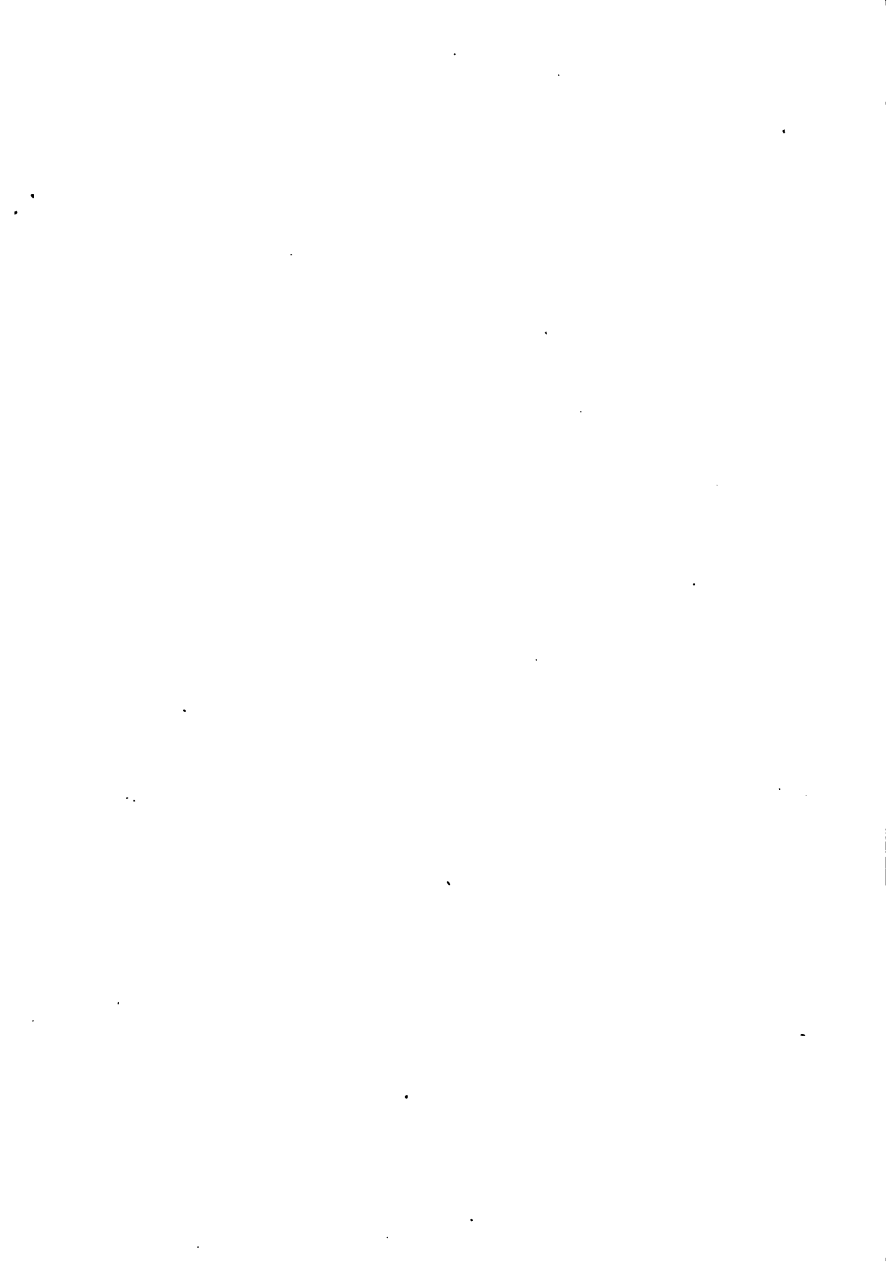
for the conversion of the world, or, to speak more precisely, of the recognition of the identity of the members of the Church with the members of the human family.

Which blessed end may the Natural Intelligence speedily bring about, to the everlasting infatuation of an eternally progressive humanity through the intervention of the unabated extension of the indefinite.

THE END?







MAY 4 1891